

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

APRIL 9, 2013

**Proclaim April as Autism Awareness Month**

Autism Awareness Month shines a bright light on autism as a growing global health crisis. According to a recent report by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), nearly one in 88 children in the United States have been identified with an autism spectrum disorder. The CDC report also identified that autism spectrum disorders are almost five times more common among boys than girls – with a rate of 1 in 54 boys. Before the 1990s, the prevalence of autism was estimated at one in two thousand. However, today autism spectrum disorders are thought to affect eleven per one thousand people, a 23% increase since the last report in 2009. The number of people known to have autism has increased dramatically partly due to changes in diagnostic practice.

Autism spectrum disorders are a group of developmental disabilities that can result in major social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Early identification and intervention can help a child access services and learn new skills. However, most children are not identified until the age of three and do not access services until the age of four. Studies have shown that African-American and Latino children are less likely to receive early diagnosis and linkage to services and are often diagnosed two years later than their counterparts. In 2011, the California Department of Developmental Services

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MOTION

MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

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spent an average *per capita* of \$11,000 per White and Asian children compared to \$7,000 on Latino children and \$6,000 on African-American children, contributing to existing disparities in access to services and treatment.

The different activities surrounding Autism Awareness Month help to increase and develop knowledge of the autism epidemic and impart information regarding the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention. These activities also help to drive much needed funding for research and resources to Los Angeles County's most vulnerable residents.

Special Needs Network, Inc. is a non-profit, community-based organization that has been on the forefront of assisting low-income and working families impacted by this incurable disorder and is proud of its accomplishments which include providing much needed advocacy training, outreach and resources to more than 15,000 Los Angeles County residents, many of whom live at or below the poverty line.

Special Needs Network, Inc. will celebrate Autism Awareness Month with a series of events that are designed to continue to raise awareness of autism and related disorders and share critical information regarding the importance of diagnosis and early intervention.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

Proclaim the month of April as Autism Awareness Month throughout the County of Los Angeles and join the Special Needs Network, Inc. in their effort to promote awareness of the autism epidemic and the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention.

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